

1 Interview Summaries

1.1 City of Saco

Interview Type	Personal, Municipality
Interview Location	Saco City Hall
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Interviewer	AGI / Richard Sutton rs@appgeo.com
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1.1.1 Overview

Saco is a city of approximately 15,500 people located fifteen miles south of Portland. With Biddeford just across the Saco River, Saco is a hub of commercial and retail activity in southern Maine. It is a coastal city with beaches as well as historic brick manufacturing buildings along the river.

Saco has 7,200 taxable real estate parcels and about 6800 total housing units. Total net taxable real value in the town is just under \$800,000,000. Building permits average 70/year. Of the 6,800 total housing units in 1990, 3,960 were single family homes, 2,365 were multi family and 410 were mobile homes. Median value of housing units in Sanford is \$114,000.

The town maintains full-time staff and is open to the public five days a week.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

Saco is in the early stages of implementing its GIS, but is moving quickly. The city conducted an informal initial needs analysis to assess needs and their development path, and has recently taken delivery on 1' color orthophoto imagery from James Sewall of Old Town. Saco is formulating plans and allocating funds to acquire parcels, hire initial dedicated GIS staff, and develop a high quality, multi departmental system. Numerous city employees (5-7) utilize existing GIS capabilities through ArcView at least occasionally to view the Saco and Maine OGIS data.

Saco represents a municipality that is at the cusp of implementing high quality, multi-departmental GIS.

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

(2) Arc 8.1 licenses

High speed network, GIS-class computers and high resolution monitors.

No dedicated GIS staff at present, but will be staffed within the next 18 months.

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

- Saco has used its GPS receiver to capture locations of all visible city infrastructure, including manholes, hydrants and other ‘street furniture.’
- Street centerlines
- Building footprints
- Floodplain boundaries are available for 25% of the community as are 2-foot contours.

Currently unavailable but desired data sets include:

Parcels will be automated during the coming fiscal year at an anticipated expense of \$70,000.

1.1.2.3.2 Attribute Data

CAMA system is VISION. Parcels will be linked to this system as soon as they are automated and available (2002).

There is no citywide permitting system.

1.1.2.3.3 Data Issues

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

Planning is using existing CAD parcels and viewing GPS collected feature data and new orthophotography. There are no specifically written GIS applications currently in use in Saco.

Planned future GIS activity and applications:

- Parcel GIS data layer is under development
- Street centerlines will be delivered with parcels
- Next phase will include building footprints and other planimetrics (hydrography), as well as an accurate GIS zoning map

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

- Saco has received a FIT (Flooding Information Tool) grant from FEMA of \$8000 to more accurately predict inundation areas in the city. This will vastly improve the existing FIRM data used to delineate floodplains, and is part of a nationwide initiative FEMA has launched to proactively lessen disaster impacts.
- Saco is in the midst of a city-wide technology plan. GIS planning for the city will be a subset of this plan.

- Saco is in favor of utilizing Southern Maine Regional Planning to update zoning maps. Meeting participants also felt strongly about organizing the state planning agencies so that the successes of the best ones could be used to accelerate development of those less advanced. The prevailing sentiment was that GPCOG's advances should filter more quickly to SMRPC and the others.
- Saco believes there should be some vehicle for cost recovery or ongoing funding for accurate data layers that can be made public by the state via a central warehouse. If communities are to make these data available according to a consistent, state sponsored specification, there should be a mechanism maintained for rewarding this compliance and contribution. Ideally it would work much the same way as local road maintenance gets reimbursed according to mileage.
- Saco is very interested in using the GIS to interact and plan cooperatively with abutting communities, and would like to see standard specifications for data development and management distributed centrally by the Maine Office of GIS.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

- Saco is a statewide (and nationally recognized) leader in proactive disaster planning through its participation in FEMA's Project Impact. The lessons being learned through its participation in this program will be useful statewide and the data developed in the city should be made available statewide.
- As Saco implements its GIS it will enjoy task efficiencies in such areas as producing abutters notifications in the Assessing department and map generation for public works and assessing. Additional services such as higher accuracy wetlands delineation and assessment of their relationship to potential development will be facilitated through use of the new imagery and vector data.